Talks with Golden Chain Links

BY

ETHEL M. WHYTE

TALKS

WITH

GOLDEN CHAIN LINKS

Talks

WITH

Golden Chain Links

ETHEL M. WHYTE

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE
ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA
1916

Sold by
THE THEOSOPHICAL PRESS
Wheaton, Illinois

Copyright Registered

All Rights Reserved

Permission for translations will be given

BY

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

Adyar, Madras, India

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Chapter I.	1
Chapter II.	6
Chapter III.	9
Chapter IV.	12
Chapter V.	15
Chapter VI.	18
Chapter VII.	22
Chapter VIII.	26
Chapter IX.	29
Chapter X.	33
Chapter XI.	37
Chapter XII.	41
Chapter XIII.	44

Talks with Golden Chain Links

CHAPTER I

I am a link in the Golden Chain of Love that stretches round the world, and must keep my link bright and strong.

DEAR LITTLE LINK,

You have joined the Golden Chain of Love and you are trying to make yourself a bright and shining link which shall strengthen the Chain.

What is the Chain we are trying to build? We cannot see it with our ordinary eyes, can we? But it is a *real* thing all the same, and when we think about it we can see it with the eyes of our mind. Does that sound very funny to you, I wonder? I shall try to explain in these talks what

I mean by it. To-day I want to talk about bodies, and this Golden Chain of ours *is* a body, one that you are helping to build although you cannot see it. It is a body in the thought world, and you build it by thinking.

Let us think to-day about other kinds of bodies—bodies that we can all see—I mean these bodies that we are wearing, you and I, and Mother and Father, and your dog and pussy, and the birds in the trees, and millions of other beings all round us.

"What *do* you mean," some of you say, "I am not *wearing* my body, I *am* my body."

Are you? How old are you, little Link —seven? or eight? or ten? Well, if you are some age like that, your body has been living seven or eight or ten years, hasn't it? Now will you tell me where you were *before that time*? You must have been *somewhere*, mustn't you, and yet you know your body was not then born. If you and

your body are the same that is rather a puzzle isn't it!

The only way out of the difficulty that I know, is to understand that your body is *not* yourself, but something you use to live in, here in this world, through which you learn about the world, and the people and animals and things that also have bodies in it.

If this is the first time you have ever heard it said that you are something different from your body, it will seem very strange to you perhaps, but if you will think about it for a bit you will soon come to understand it. You will find that it is you who give your body orders—when you want to go somewhere, for instance, you tell your feet to go walking one after the other until you get to the place. You are so used to being obeyed at once that you do not think about it, but once upon a time your feet had to *learn* to walk, and it was really *you* inside who made your foot go out because

you wanted perhaps to get something that Mother was holding out to you.

Later on you made your fingers hold a pencil and learn to write, because *you* wanted to—your body didn't want it. And so always it is We who live inside these bodies of ours, and we must never forget that we lived before these bodies were born, and shall live long after these bodies have done their work and been left behind.

Each little Link should try to think of him-(or her-) self as a shining light, a part of the Great Light which we call God, which is trying to shine more brightly through the body we use for our daily life.

And how about all the other bodies round about us? In each of them too is part of the Great Light, and we must try to see the light through the body. Sometimes it is easy to see the light, but often it is not. When some schoolfellow helps you, or speaks kindly to you, it is not hard to think that God's light is shining through him or her—is it? but when

we see some one who is old and perhaps ugly or cross looking, we must try to remember that the light is there too, only the windows of the house of the body in which that light is living, are dirty and clouded.

Let us see that we always keep our windows clean, so that the light may shine out brightly and make sunshine for those about us.

CHAPTER II

I SPOKE just now of other bodies that we see in the world, through which also the Light shines, bodies that we speak of as animals, or plants, or stones. In each one of these too is some of the Light. What happens when these bodies "die" as we say? It means that the Light has passed out of them and gone to shine elsewhere.

Coming through the fields to-day I saw under the hedge a little bird, lying still, with glazed eyes ; it had fallen from the nest and the Light had gone out from that little body. For the moment it made me sad, but I thought to myself: "That Light has only gone elsewhere and it will shine again presently in some other little body—so there is no need to be sorry."

Where do these beautiful primroses come from that are in the woods, and in our gardens to-day? Some months ago the snow was on the ground, and in the woods we saw only brown earth and dead leaves.

These trees, too, covered with young green, and the buds on the lilac bush and the may tree—what makes these come, year after year, have you ever thought about it, little Link? They come because God's life, the Light that is in you and me, is also in them. And the Light in their case chooses beautiful bodies and puts itself forth in blossom and leaf and fruit, time after time.

But beautiful and wonderful though their bodies are, they are less beautiful and less wonderful than these bodies which you and I have.

So shall we not be very proud and happy to have such wonderful bodies, through which we can see and hear and smell all the beautiful things that come in the Spring-time—the flowers, and the birds and the little white lambs in the fields? And let

us learn to love the Light everywhere, knowing that it is God's Light, and to help every living thing we meet to show forth as much of that Light as possible.

CHAPTER III

We have now learnt that we are each a part of God's Light shining through a body which belongs to this world; and we have learnt too that all the bodies around us are being used by other parts of God's Light, and that they are each shining out in their own way, through their own particular bodies.

Now I want to say something about leaving these bodies. For some day we shall all leave this body we know so well, and we know that just now every day there are very many young men who are leaving their bodies, long before the body becomes old or feeble. Why is this? It is because the Light in these young men has made them know that there is something greater than happiness of the body, and that is

happiness of the mind, of the You inside. This happiness only comes when we do what we believe to be right. And so thousands to-day are risking the loss of their bodies so that duty may be done.

Don't you think the Light inside will burn a thousand times more brightly than if they had turned their back on duty so as to save their body pain? We know it will, and so, when we hear of one who has gone out and left his body on the battle-field, or in the hospital, we try not to be too unhappy. For we know that the Light, which he really is, cannot go out, but must shine again some day in another and a better body.

When we think like this, we are beginning to understand what has puzzled many wiser heads than ours. And so, little Link, if you and I can remember that bodies are the instruments that the Thinker uses, and that when He lays them down it is only to do other work, and later on to make a new and better instrument for Himself,

we shall have learnt a secret that will save us from much sorrow. And better still, we shall have gained the power to lessen some of the sorrow in the world, and in doing this our link will shine out bright and golden.

CHAPTER IV

I must keep my link bright and strong.

Our Golden Chain, then, is a living body. Now of what is a body made? It is built up of tiny lives, which we call cells, each of them a wonderful little world of its own. Some day you must learn about these cells, of which there are myriads in your body, and of how they grow and give birth to other baby cells, and of how the health of our whole body depends on the health of these cells. If they are not properly nourished, or if they die, then the part of the body in which they are becomes ill or dead. So you see how important these cells are.

Now each little link in our Golden Chain is such a cell, and the health of the whole chain depends on how the cells are—whether

they are full of life, or whether they have gone to sleep or dropped out of the Chain altogether. Let us try to understand how this is.

Our chain is a Chain of Love, isn't it? In the heart of each one who joins it is a flame of love, a little bit of God's sunshine, and each one who joins the Chain adds something to the light that burns through it and keeps it alive. One might picture a ring of glass globes through which an electric current passed, lighting up each one, and making thus a complete chain of light.

Now what would happen if one of those lamps got broken? Its light would go out, wouldn't it? But not only the light in the one lamp—all the rest of the lights would be affected because the link—the circuit as it would be called—was broken.

So I want you to see how important it is for each one of the Links to keep his light brightly burning, not for his sake alone but for the sake of the whole Chain

Perhaps you ask: "How is this to be done, and how can I love a lot of children whom I don't know?"

CHAPTER V

WELL, first of all consider what it was that made you want to join the Golden Chain. Can you remember? Perhaps it was partly because you saw other children joining and you thought you would like to have the card with the Promise on it. That was a very natural feeling: but I hope also that deep down inside you felt that to join an Order such as this would help you to grow more like what you want to be, that knowing yourself as a Link in the Chain of Love would make it easier for you to be loving and gentle and kind. Was it not this kind of feeling which made you want to join?

I am sure you found that saying the Promise and remembering that you had now become a Link *did* help you to be

more loving. Then perhaps after a time, as the novelty wore off, you began to forget about it and you did not repeat your Promise every morning. What would be the effect of this on the Chain? Can you not see how each time you repeated the words of the Promise, thinking what they meant, and especially at the end, as you sent a loving thought round all the Chain, your own little flame of light would burn up brightly—as the fire does sometimes if you throw in sugar or salt—and a thrill of life would go all through the Chain. But when you forgot your Promise and stopped trying to make your link bright, the light in your part of the Chain would die down and flicker almost out perhaps. Now that is only a picture I am drawing, but it is a true image of what really happens. For as we think every day of helping and trying to become useful and to love those about us, we are like lamps shining out, and it becomes easier for others whom we see and meet to make their lights shine out also.

But perhaps you say: "I can understand how by being loving myself I can make it easier for those about me to be loving—but how can what I think or feel affect other children in different parts of the world?" Ah! that brings us back to what I was telling you before, namely that this Golden Chain which we are building with our thoughts is a real living body, though we cannot see or touch it. I shall try to show you later on how, when we *think*, we are making something, making a living picture in the thought world, just as we might make something in this world by painting, or weaving, or by any other way.

CHAPTER VI

But first you will ask what I mean by the *thought world*. Let us try to understand. You have got the idea, have you not, that you are a part of God, a Light shining through bodies which you use. You have several such bodies; one you wear all the day, and in it you work and play and walk and talk and eat. But at night that body is tired and you put it to bed.

And what happens then, do you think? What do you do all the time your body is sleeping?

Some people think that you slip away and go off to fairyland—not some far away place, for fairyland is all about us really all the time, only we can't see it with the eyes of our earth body. But at night you are wearing your fairy body, which is much

lighter and brighter than your earth body, and in it you can go wherever you want to just by wishing to get there.

Now when you are in this fairy body of yours, you are in a part of what I called the *thought world*, and here you may meet children from all parts of the world, as well as children who have not got earth bodies for the time being.

Have you ever read *The Blue Bird*? If not I advise you to read it or to get some one to tell you the story, and there you will hear of the land where the children were in their fairy bodies waiting for the time when they came back to their new earth bodies. You belong to that world all the time, just as much as you do to this earth world; but when you are shut up in your earth body you forget about it.

But I will tell you a wonderful thing, which is that whenever you wish to help some one, or long to be brave and true, or when you are watching or listening to something beautiful and feel how lovely it is,

you are helping to make that fairy body of yours more beautiful—you are learning to use it better. For it is *through that body that you really feel* and not through this earth body as it seems.

Now do you begin to see how you are really linked up all the time with many children whom you may never have seen in their earth bodies? You know them in their fairy bodies—and when you meet them in the thought world you feel quite at home and happy with them. So it is good to try to remember, even when you are down in your earth body, that as you think and feel, you are making your fairy body grow; and each Link who tries to think and feel beautifully and refuses to think or feel unkindly or crossly or untruly, is making his part of the Golden Chain bright and strong.

For this world we see is not the only world by any means, and you and I are living in the thought world when we are not living here. It is in that thought world that the Golden Chain really is all

the time, and there all the Links may know each other, though down in their earth bodies they may live many thousands of miles apart.

CHAPTER VII

So I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing I meet, and to protect and help all who are weaker than myself.

We now come to the *way* in which you are going to make your link bright and strong—and in the sentence at the head of this chapter there are two things promised—Gentleness and Strength. Now at first sight perhaps these two seem opposite qualities. If you think of a very gentle person or animal, he or it is not always very strong or able to "protect and help all who are weaker".

But it is possible to be at the same time very gentle and very strong, and that is what we want to try to understand —for we have promised to try to be both.

Let us see if we can think of anything, or anyone, that shows out strength as well

as gentleness. Look at that little brook rippling through the meadow, with a pretty tinkle over the stones. The water seems to flow so smoothly and gently. Yet you know that that same water runs into a big stream further on, and that in turn flows into a river and later becomes part of the great ocean. What strength there is in the mighty sea, which bears upon its bosom great fleets of iron ships with hundreds of people on them! Water then has strength, as well as gentleness.

Ah! you say, but it is different with people—how can a person be both gentle and strong at the same time? I wonder have you ever heard of St. Francis, the Saint of Assisi? He was one of the gentlest men that ever breathed—he loved all that lives, and all the living creatures seemed glad to come near him. There are wonderful stories of how, when he preached, the birds, "little sisters" as he called them, would cluster round him, and how the animals felt him as their friend.

But one day St. Francis heard that a wolf was causing great trouble in a village near by—coming down at night and stealing chickens and killing children and even grown people, and the poor folk in the village were all afraid to go abroad for fear of meeting this fierce wolf. So Francis determined to go and face this wolf and see if he could not make him friendly to the villagers. He did not know, of course, if he would succeed, but being strong he knew it was his duty to protect the weak, and so—not thinking about what would happen to himself, but just going out to do what was his duty—he went to meet the wolf. And the legend tells how the wolf came rushing out to spring on him, but Francis—the friend of all creatures and the servant of God—was so different from other people that even the wolf felt it, and instead of attacking him, came and lay down at the feet of the Saint; and he—in his strength and his gentleness—spoke to the wolf and made him feel that

he must behave differently. And the story goes on to say that the wolf nevermore troubled the villagers, but that he became their friend, and they fed him as he went quietly in and out of their houses.

So you see it *is* possible to be strong and fearless as well as gentle, and we must not forget that many of those who to-day are putting aside their fear and going out into the battle-field are men who in times of peace are gentle and kind, and they are fighting now, not because thay want to kill or injure any man, but because it has become their duty for the time being to fight for the protection of you and me and others like us who are weaker than they are.

CHAPTER VIII

And yet one other example, little Link, of how gentleness and strength can grow together in one and the same person. Think of the Lord Christ and all the stories you have heard about Him. Never was there a Gentler Being on this earth, and the children knew this as they clustered round His feet. And yet He was so strong that every one in trouble came to Him to ask for and get His help. All the sick and the sorrowful felt that in Him they would find help, and they brought all their burdens to Him, and He *never* failed them—notice that in the stories you read about all the Great Ones in the different Bibles of the world. They always give to the people who come to them just what those people need. They never say

"I'm sorry I can't help you," but always help. And this is because they are so *strong* as well as gentle.

Now you and I, little Link, cannot grow strong all at once—but we can begin to try, can't we? Perhaps it is easier to grow gentle. How shall we try to grow these two beautiful plants of gentleness and strength in the garden of our character?

Well there are many ways, and you will be able to think them out for yourself. But one way of growing them is to read and think about people who are gentle and are strong. And another way, that we can all use, is to make a promise to oneself that every day, for a week, say, we will try to find out and to protect something or some one that is weaker than we are. It may be a blind man who wants to cross the road, or a poor doggie who has lost his way home, or a schoolfellow who is in trouble and wants sympathy—there are so many people and animals who are weaker than we are and

need our help. If we keep a look out we are sure to find some of them.

And as we try to help some one each day, we shall find gentleness springing up in our hearts; for we cannot pour out love and help on anyone without becoming gentler for it. So in this way, you see, we shall be carrying out both parts of this Promise of ours—and it will make us so happy in the doing too!

CHAPTER IX

And I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts.

To-day I want to tell you something about that thought body of yours which you are living in and using, and which you are actually building, as you use it. Have you ever watched a bird gathering material of which to build his nest? See how he flies down and picks up a bit of straw, or a twig, or some soft wadding to line it with —and how beautiful it is when it is built, all woven into one strong little house for the baby birds to live in.

But you are a builder also, little Link, did you know that? All day and every day you are picking up and *making* material to build into that thought body of yours, which you are so often using. Does

that seem very strange to you? Let us try to understand.

You remember that you are a little bit of God's life, using a body which your Father and Mother gave you, when you came back again into this world, from Heaven—or the thought world where you were living before. But when you came back you brought with you something that we call a *character*. You know what that is, do you not? You know that every one is a little different from every one else; that your Mother and Father and brothers and sisters, Nurse, your governess not only *look* different from each other, have a different outside body that is—but they have a different inside body, or character, as well.

Everybody knows this is true, but what everybody does not know is about that inside body and how it is built. So I want to tell you what I believe to be true about it—then you can think it over and see if it seems to you likely to be

true. If it seems to you altogether foolish you need not trouble about it any more, but I advise you not to be in too great a hurry to think it is foolish, for many wise and good people say it is the truth!

Well then, I believe you built that inside body of yours—your thought and feeling body—by your thoughts and feelings when you lived on earth before at different times in other bodies. For I am sure this is not the first time you have been on this old earth of ours, but that you have lived many lives on it in the past, perhaps hundreds of years ago. Are you in a girl's body to-day? Then perhaps you were in a boy's body last life, or the life before. And probably you were not in England or America—or wherever you live now—but you may have been in India, or in Greece, or Rome.

But wherever you were, and whatever kind of outside body you were wearing, you were very much the same *inside* as you are to-day, though I hope your inside

body has grown a little more beautiful than it was in those days.

Do you remember how we learnt that your outside body is built up of many tiny lives called cells, one added to another? Your inside or thought body is also built of many tiny lives, added one by one just as the bird adds to its nest, but in your case the lives are *thoughts* or *feelings*. Every time you think or wish strongly, you are adding something to your inside body; and the thought body you brought with you when you came to earth this time is built of all the thoughts and wishes that you had in your other lives on earth.

So you can understand how it is that we all have different bodies, for we are all wishing and thinking differently, aren't we? Let us try to see how it works.

CHAPTER X

FIRST of all you must try to see your own thought body—or rather the *character* which shows through that body—for we must never forget that it is YOU who are using the body all the time, just as YOU are using the outer body that we can all see. I wonder if you know anything about your own character? You probably know, at any rate, whether you are often very cross, or whether you find it difficult to be quite truthful, or to be patient, or gentle.

Or, again, you will know whether you love what is beautiful very much and are hurt when you see or hear ugliness. It is a good thing to try to see our own characters just as we would look at some house that was being built, to see what is good in it, and where it needs alteration. For

we have each built in many good things in past lives—love of what is good and true and beautiful, desire to help what is weak or suffering, courage, love of truth, and many other good things.

At the same time there are gaps in all our nests—holes which want filling up. Can you think of any such holes in your thought and feeling body? Is there room for a little more gentleness, or patience, or strength, or some other quality that we know to be good and long to possess?

I know there are many such holes, little friend, in *my* thought body, and I expect you will find, when you begin to think about it, that there are also in yours.

How then can we set to work to build in the rest of the things we want to have in this character of ours, which goes with us from life to life? Here at last I am coming to the Promise which stands at the head of Chapter IX. For it is by thinking that we build up our characters; the more "pure and beautiful thoughts" we have, the

stronger and better will our thought bodies become.

The reason of this is very simple, though it may sound strange at first. It is this: every time you and I long for something or think steadily about something, we are drawing towards us thought or feeling matter of a certain kind. If our longing is for something good, it will be pure thought matter that is drawn towards us; if it be for something evil, we are drawing to us impure thought matter.

Say you are very angry with some one. You are then dwelling on ugly thoughts, and so you are drawing into your thought body the matter in which those ugly thoughts clothe themselves.

But suppose you are thinking kindly of some one, wanting to help them, you then draw to your thought body beautiful clear-coloured matter, which will be built into it and make it more beautiful.

Every thought you send out is like a little fairy, good or bad, and it will clothe

itself in a body of beautiful or of ugly matter, and draw that matter towards you to make part of your character.

So you see how careful we must be to think only pure and beautiful thoughts if you want to build up a nice, strong and beautiful thought body.

CHAPTER XI

But there is still something more to say about these thoughts and feelings of ours! Do you know what they do on board ship when something goes wrong, when the ship strikes a rock or gets on fire? They send out signals to other ships by what is called "Wireless Telegraphy".

If you are interested in mechanical things and can get some one to explain to you how this is done, I think you will find it interesting, but all I can tell you about it here is that it is possible from a certain place on the ship to send out into the air a message which will be received at certain places either on other big ships or on the coast. This is done without any wire or other visible means of communication, and

it was thought to be a very wonderful discovery when Signor Marconi, an Italian, found out how this could be done.

But you and I are sending out "wireless" messages many times a day and every day of our lives! What do you think of that?

Whenever you think about some one who is not with you, you are sending a little invisible message to him. If it is a loving thought, it will go to him, and although he may not be able to see it, it will make him feel a little happier. If it is a thought of anger, on the other hand, it will make him feel a little uncomfortable.

We know this, for one reason because some people can see these thoughts, and they tell us that a loving thought sent to anyone is of a beautiful rose colour, whilst an angry thought is an ugly red. If your thought is very strong and clear it will take a shape as well as colour.

Several drawings have been made showing what many thoughts look like, and you can

see these pictures for yourself if you get hold of the book.[1]

So now you begin to see, don't you, how important our thoughts are; how we not only build up our thought bodies by them, those thought bodies through which our character shows out in life after life; but how also we are helping or hindering other people—making it easier for them to build well by sending them loving, helpful thoughts, or else making it more difficult because we are constantly sending ugly thoughts towards them.

Let us each try to surround ourselves and all the people we know with an army of rosy thoughts, and especially to send little winged messengers of strength and peace to any whom we know to be in trouble or distress.

In this way shall we many a time become good angels to people whom we cannot otherwise help—and as we are pouring out

[1] *Thought Forms*, by C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant. Price 10s. 6d., T.P.S., 161 New Bond Street, London, W.; also *First Steps in Theosophy*, by the present writer.

love upon them we are at the same time weaving beautiful materials to build into our own thought bodies.

So let us every day try "to think pure and beautiful thoughts".

CHAPTER XII

I will try to . . . speak pure and beautiful words.

WHAT are pure and beautiful words? We all know what ugly, cross words are, don't we? But perhaps we think that, as it is necessary for us all to do a great deal of talking every day, we cannot stop always to choose words that are pure and beautiful. But it is wonderful what a change we can make if we begin to think about our words—for you know we mostly talk without thinking, and often words slip out which afterwards we wish we had never spoken.

It has been said by a very great and good Man that unless the words we speak are kind and beautiful and true, we had better not speak at all. Let us think for a while about our talking in the day and see if it falls

under one or all of these three heads, and if it does not, whether we could change it so as to make it fit them. To do this we shall have to *notice our speech*, and this will be very useful, and the first lesson we shall probably learn is that we talk a great deal more than we need do.

What is speech for? How are we better off than dumb people, have you ever thought? Well, I think in two ways. First because we can make our wants known, and secondly because we can help other people by kind speech and by giving them information they want which we happen to have. I cannot think of any other use for speech, can you? And yet of course we use it in many other ways. We use it, alas, often for speaking unkindly to others, sometimes even wanting to hurt them; or for passing on some story about another child or person. Whenever we do this we are *mis*using the God-given gift of speech. Do you remember the fairy story about the two girls, from one of whom, whenever she

spoke, there came forth pearls, whilst from the mouth of the other came toads?

Now we none of us would care to be like that second child, should we?—and yet when we repeat an unkind story, or say an unkind thing to some one, we are sending forth little evil things that do more harm than we know. One of the great Teachers has told us that "much common talk is unnecessary and foolish; when it is gossip, it is wicked". So He tells the pupil to whom He is writing: "Be accustomed to listen rather than to talk; do not offer opinions unless directly asked for them." And you and I, little Link, if we could follow this advice would become much more useful people in the world than we are to-day—and people would like us better too!

CHAPTER XIII

Let us look at one day of our life and see whether our speech falls under the heads I have suggested; either making our wants known, or trying to help other people, and whether it is true, kind, or useful. Now I don't of course know exactly what your day is like, but I am going to try to make a kind of guess at it. First of all then, I wonder what you do when you wake? If some one else sleeps in the room with you, perhaps you speak to them and ask them the time, or make a remark about the weather. Well, that may be called *useful* speech. Then before you go down I hope you say your prayers—or at any rate your Golden Chain Promise—and perhaps after our talk to-day you will think more about the Promise as to your words.

Next comes your morning greeting to your Father and Mother and your family. So far there has hardly been time for any speech that was not kind and true. Then comes the bustle to get off to school and to be in your place in class. You will be careful here, won't you little Link, that all the things you say shall be kind and make the beginning of the day bright for your schoolfellows and teachers.

Through school time you may have a test in truthfulness, and you will have to see that all the words you speak are exactly accurate, as well as useful. Perhaps it is after school—in recess, or on your way home—that the temptation comes to speak unkind words. A schoolfellow may have done something foolish or wrong, and it will seem very natural to talk it over with your own special crony. But you who are a Link in a Chain of Love will remind yourself that "gossip is wicked," and you will make up your mind that no little toads shall come out of your mouth.

It won't be easy, you may even give offence to your friends, or get laughed at in the beginning, but if you stick to this plan and always refuse to speak evil of others behind their backs, you will find that gradually your friends get used to it—and what is more they respect you for it, and begin to copy your example!

Will you try this plan when next some one begins to talk to you about a schoolfellow's failings? Perhaps the easiest way is to try to point out something that the child in question did *well*, and direct your friend's attention towards that. There is a beautiful story told of how the Lord Christ was walking with some of His disciples, and they came across a dead dog. In the East, you know, dogs are not thought so much of as with us, and a dead dog would be thought especially impure. So the disciples turned aside in disgust. But their great Master, knowing that everywhere—even amidst impurity—there is something which is good, said to them, pointing to

the dog's strong white teeth: "See what beautiful teeth he has got." So we must look always for some beautiful thing even in the midst of what is unlovely. Sooner or later probably you will have frankly to say that you don't mean to gossip because you think it's a bad thing and does no one any good. Only you mustn't mind even if you are thought a prig. It doesn't matter being thought a prig, so long as one takes very good care not to be a prig. And as a prig is one who preaches what he doesn't practise, you will have to keep a sharp look-out, little Link, that you do try to put into practice all these things that we talk about as true and beautiful.

In your recreation there will be many chances, times when you will have to "watch out" not to exaggerate, or try to make things you have done seem clever; to be perfectly fair in all games, which is only another way of being true; to try to find out and talk about all that is beautiful and wonderful in the world and in the people

and things about you, instead of what is ugly or low. In all these ways you can work to make your thought and speech useful and helpful; and when you have learnt to control it so that all you say gives pleasure to others, you will find that people are glad to be with you and come to you for refreshment and help when they are sad or tired.

For there are those living amongst us to-day whose every word brings pleasure to those amongst whom they live, and you and I, if we want some day to be like them, must begin now to watch the words that want to come out of our mouth!

———

CHAPTER XIV

I will try . . to do pure and beautiful actions.

PURE thoughts, pure words and pure actions —all these are expected from a Link in our Golden Chain. Have you ever wondered *why* they are asked for? Why is it so necessary that your actions, for instance, should be all pure and beautiful? What would happen if they were not so?

To answer these questions, little Link, we must try to understand why you and I are in this world at all, and what business we have with the others who are also here. Let us see if we can find out something about it all.

You remember we said that we are each a part of God's life—a little of His light shining through bodies. Now why did He

separate us off from Him in this way? Do you think it may have been to enable us —little sparks of His fire—to grow into strong, big, glorious Lights such as God Himself? Some of us think this was the reason for our being sent into the world as separate little people.

Think for a moment of a beautiful sunflower with its great golden face. What happens when that sunflower dies? You know that the seeds which are hidden away in part of the flower fall into the earth, and there they take root and grow up into a plant like the first one, and each of them in turn bears a beautiful sunflower. So the tiny seeds grow in course of time into the full flower. Something like this happens with us—only God never dies as the sunflower dies—but He sends us out, little seeds of His life, into the world, and here we have got to grow through sunshine and storm until one day we become like unto God our Father. You remember how the Lord Christ said

that we are each of us to become "perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect"—that can only be when the little seed has grown into the full flower. In our next talk we will try to understand more about how this takes place.

CHAPTER XV

Do you go to school, little Link? If so, what do you go there for? I don't suppose *you* chose to go, did you? Father and Mother sent you, I expect. And why did they send you to school—was it to get rid of you for a time each day? or was it just to please themselves that they sent you?

You know perfectly well that they sent you to school so that you might *learn*, and that through learning you might become wise and good, and able to do two things: firstly, to do your work in the world, whatever that work may turn out to be; and secondly to make you able to help other people. These are the two great advantages of learning, and we know that

unless we do learn we shall never be very happy, because we shall be able to do neither of these two things.

Now don't you think God sends us to school in the world very much in the same way that your father and mother sent you to school? For He knows that in the world there is very much for us to learn, and as we learn these world lessons we become able to do the real work which is ours, and which we only find out by degrees, and also we become able to help other people who are also scholars in this world like ourselves.

But you do not learn all your lessons at school in your first term there, do you? What happens at the end of a term? First examinations come, don't they, so that your teacher and you yourself may find out how much you have really learnt of what was set you to learn. Next follow the holidays, and the holidays have a purpose too—have you ever thought about it? The holidays are to give you a rest and

a change of occupation, so that you may go back next term freshened up and able to learn more lessons. And if you have done well in one term, you will probably be moved up into a higher class when the next term opens, where you will have rather more difficult lessons than you had before. And so it goes on, term after term, learning and resting and learning more, until the time comes when you have learnt all that that particular school can teach you, and you are ready for work of a different kind—perhaps teaching in your turn the little ones who know much less than you do.

It is just like this with all of us in the big world which is God's school. We—you and I and all the people in the world—are born into the world and live in it few or many years and learn lots of lessons. We learn to work so that we may be able to keep our bodies alive; just now Father or Mother or some other grown up person is doing that for you,

but some day you will have to learn to do it for yourself and for *your* children. We have to learn too—in this earth school of ours—how to help all sorts of people, people who are sick, or unhappy, people who are ignorant, who know very little of God's world, who perhaps have always lived in a town, for instance, and know nothing about the beautiful country with its fields and woods and streams and all the creatures who live in them.

You and I, little Link, have so many things, so many happinesses that some other people have not, and the greatest lesson we can learn, one that we can go on learning more and more all through our lives, is how to give some of our happinesses to people who have not got them. And when we have really learnt that lesson we shall have become quite the happiest people in the world.

So will you think about that, and see how you can at once set about learning this lesson? I dare say you have begun to

learn it already, but we can always work harder and learn faster, can't we? And the first thing to do is to look about us to see where to begin our help. Perhaps it will be with some schoolfellow who finds a particular lesson much harder than we do; or it may be in visiting some one who is blind, or ill; or in taking a poor child out for a walk in the country, or in doing some rather dull piece of work that Mother wants you to do. There are such lots of ways of learning to help, but each of us has got to find out the ways that are just waiting for us. It doesn't much matter which way we choose, because, as I said, we learn our life-lessons by helping—the only thing that matters is that not a day passes in which we have not tried to do at least some "pure and beautiful actions".

Then, at the end of our earth life, when we have learnt as much of the lesson set for us by God as we were able to, come the holidays. We die, as people say. But

we don't die at all! We just slip away from our tired body which has been working so hard for years, and we pass into another world where we have change of occupation and perhaps do different things, just as we used to in our holidays from school. We often stay quite a long time in that other world, until we begin to long to come back again to work on earth, and then we come down and take a new baby body, and start a fresh term of God's Earth School.

CHAPTER XVI

Does it seem funny to you to think that all the people you know—even grandpapa and your school teachers and every one—are all pupils like you, in God's School? It is true though. If you think about some of your friends, you may be able to understand that they have worked very hard in their earth lives in the past and learnt a great deal of the lessons set them, so that now they are what we call very fine or good or clever people.

But when you come to look at yourself you may feel that you know very little, that you are not yet very clever, or very unselfish, or very anything in particular. Well, you know the saying that "Rome wasn't built in a day," and just as that great city, famous throughout the world,

had to be built up slowly year after year by hard work directed by careful thought —one beautiful palace, or amphitheatre or temple being completed after another—or just as some splendid garden may be in the course of years made out of a rough field, so each of us has got to build up his character, life after life, planting the seeds of love and truth and right thought which will grow into fine and noble characters and give us the power to help others who are weaker than ourselves. There is a very useful little saying which you may like to learn ; it runs,

> Sow a thought and you reap a habit,
> Sow a habit and you reap a character,
> Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

There are some long words there which you may not quite understand, but really those lines say just what I have been trying to show you, which is that each of us all the time is making, not only our characters but our happiness ; for as we sow we shall reap, and if we want some day

to be heroes or heroines doing fine things quite easily without thinking about them, we have got to begin now to do each task that comes to us *as perfectly as we can do it*, and to try to grow in the gardens of our minds the plants of love and purity and all other good things. Does it seem to you a long, long task that is set in front of you? Yes, little friend, it *is* a long task, but we cannot do more than a bit at a time, and we shall find all sorts of joys come to us during our work. Nor must you ever forget one thing, which is that any good that you succeed in building into this character of yours is there for ever and ever. You will *always* have that good through all your lives to come. Each of us has now *some* good things, perhaps the wish to help the weak or suffering, perhaps courage, or the feeling that we must always speak the truth; or it may be some talent—ability to draw well, or a great love of music. All these are powers which we have built into our real selves in past lives.

Isn't that encouraging? It shows us that we *can get any power we want to get.* If we want to be very wise, we have only got to work with all our might at our lessons now, and to go on working at knowledge all through this life and the next and the next, and some day we shall find that we *are* wise and know all that we used to long to know.

In the same way, if we want to become very loving—so that every one who comes near us is helped just by being near us, as people used to be when they gathered round Lord Christ, or Lord Krishna, or any other of the Great Ones—well, we need only to begin now to try to be always loving in our everyday life, and go on doing that all through this life and all our future lives; and some day—think of it!—we shall quite certainly, if we go steadily working on, become a Lord of Love—even such as those Great Ones are to-day.

It seems almost too good to believe, doesn't it? But that is a silly saying, for

nothing is too good to believe, and the better a thing is, the truer it is really. So let us keep this thought in our hearts, that each of us may in time become exactly what he wants to become; and let us begin right away to build up the quality we most want to shine out through us—Love, or Strength, or Wisdom, or whatever it may be. The building will need great patience, and we must not grow discouraged, for we shall forget about it often and often, but so long as we always come back and start again where we left off, we are bound to build our "Rome" some day. And then, when we always do pure and beautiful actions without having to think about it, we shall have become really useful servants of the Great Masters, and able to help them in Their work for the world.

CHAPTER XVII

May every Link in the Golden Chain become bright and strong.

AND now we come to the last words of our Promise. These are in the nature of what we generally call a prayer or at least a very strong wish. So these words should be said each morning very carefully, and as you say them you should feel that you are breathing out a blessing on all the Links in our Chain. You remember how we saw that we are all closely bound together, and that where one does well it helps all the other Links in the great Chain, and where one is careless or forgetful or naughty it injures all the rest? So this thought of yours every morning may be a real help to all the boys and girls who belong to the Chain if you will wish

hard, as you say it, to help them, and think of a little thread of golden light as running through all the Chain.

We spoke of how that Chain is real in the thought world, and may be seen by those who have opened their thought world eyes; and when any one of us says these words of our Promise *really meaning them*, it will show in that world by a sudden brightening of the light in the Chain, sending a thrill of life right through it. If every Link remembered his or her Promise and said these words faithfully day by day, that Chain would become a much stronger and more living power for helping us and the world than it is to-day. At least each of us can begin to wake it up and make it more useful, can we not?

And there is one other thought which you should have in your mind when you are saying those words. I said that they are a kind of prayer, and as you say them you should remember that there are

Great Ones in the world who are always pouring out blessing upon the people and the animals and plants and other things in the world.

Have you ever, when digging in the sands at the seaside, as the tide was coming in, dug a little channel to the castle you were building, and seen how the water rushed up into that and reached your castle more quickly than the rest of the waves coming up the beach? Well that is a picture of what *we* may do with the waters of life—the blessings poured out by the Master on the world. We may make channels for Their blessing, so that it may reach more quickly those who need it. And you may make such a channel every day if, as you say your Promise, you lift up your head to the Master (you may think of the Lord Christ, or Lord Krishna, or of the Lord Jesus, or of any of those Great Ones who have grown so great through ages of lives lived in helping the world) and just offer to Him the little channel of

your love, praying that He may pour out His blessing on every Link in the Golden Chain, so that each may grow bright and strong.

And so, dear little Link, I hope you will feel that as you repeat the Promise day after day it becomes more and more to you—for it reminds you of the work we are all trying to do, and it is only as we learn to do this work better that we can be truly happy. In saying good-bye to you I can wish you nothing better than that your Link may daily become brighter and stronger so that you may take sunshine and love wherever you go.

Printed by Annie Besant at the Vasanta Press, Adyar, Madras.